

Claims 21, 25, and 37-96 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nakajima et al. in view of Gibson and Yamada (JP 5-109,737).

The rejection asserts that Nakajima et al. allegedly teaches a method of silicon crystal growth and that the sole difference between the rejected claims and Nakajima et al. is the etching and use of a gettering agent. The rejection also asserts that Gibson allegedly teaches "a method of etching silicon layers which have been grown with a catalyst in the area of the catalyst, note col. 3" and that the Yamada allegedly teaches ion implanting phosphorous oxygen ions into an amorphous silicon and then crystallization of the silicon.

Upon careful reading of the Gibson at column 3, however, the disclosure is directed to forming epitaxial metallic or insulating layers on Si, Ge, III-V, and II-VI semiconductors, (see col. 3, lines 29-45), but not to "a method of etching silicon layers which have been grown with a catalyst in the area of the catalyst" as asserted in the rejection. Thus, a prima facie case of obviousness is not established for the claims. Moreover, there is no motivation to combine "forming epitaxial metallic or insulating layers on Si, Ge, III-V, and II-VI semiconductors," as allegedly taught by Gibson, with a method of silicon crystal growth, as allegedly taught by Nakajima et al.

Furthermore, Yamada does not teach or suggest using catalyst metal, such as nickel, for promoting crystallization of a silicon film. Rather, Yamada merely teaches removing crystal defects or impurities by gettering. Thus, Yamada teaches away from intentionally adding a catalyst metal into a silicon film. Thus, it would not be obvious to combine the teachings of Yamada with the teachings of Nakajima et al.

Accordingly, the rejection of the claims under 35 USC 103(a) should be withdrawn in the next office action.

Applicant asks that all claims be allowed. Enclosed is a \$400 check for the Petition for Extension of Time fee. Please apply any other charges or credits to Deposit Account No. 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: 10/17/2001

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